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FISH INTERFAITH
CENTER

STRESS RELIEF through MINDFULNESS AWARENESS

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"If it can be solved, there's no need to worry. And if can't be solved, worry is of no use."

The Dalai Lama

CAUSES OF STRESS: science shows it is in the brain...

Scientific research today is demonstrating we can learn to live with less anxiety and more balance in our lives through simple daily meditation practices. *Mindfulness* entails learning to be more fully in the present with intention and kindness.

for Stress Relief:

Engage in a stress-relieving activity, including any regular activity that helps focus in the present:

- *exercise,*
- *time really focusing on friendship*
- *taking time out from cell phone use – turn off notifications certain periods of the day*
- *yoga,*
- *listening to music,*
- *eating* (while really tasting and enjoying the food!)
- *nature* – walk the beach or just take a walk anywhere

Try the *Mindfulness Meditation with Sound Healing by Chapman University* on [iTunesU](#) (start with the 5-minute “breath” meditation),

-or try the 5-minute “Free Guided Meditation” on www.marc.ucla.edu or any of the free guided meditations – and begin to “train your brain” to be present and less attached to the stories and anxiety about the future.

Try these exercises:

ALLEVIATING STRESS:

We define ourselves as an “anxious” person at times, as if that is our sole identity. Instead, when you are anxious, realize you are still YOU with all of your positive qualities and gifts – you just happen at this point to have the emotion of anxiety in your life. Think of emotions as moving energy – they come and they go – they do not define who you are. Your mind will accentuate the stress – remember - You don’t have to believe everything you think! Do not be afraid to “look at” your emotions for a moment, and realize they are not YOU!

Here are a few mindful exercises that allow you to have more “equanimity” in your life. This means less attachment to and experiencing less drama with those things that are impermanent – such as emotions, events, or stories that you create in your mind. You can practice a particular sequence to learn to react this way more often, like “RAIN” or “STOP”:

R A I N- Working with Emotions

R: Recognize what’s happening personally

A: Accept

I: Investigate, Inquire

N: Non-identification (don’t take it personally)

Recognize: Become aware of the kind of emotion you are having. Just this simple act of recognition can be helpful. Give it a soft mental label like “fear,” “sadness,” “joy,” etc.

Accept: Can you let this emotion be here? Is it ok to have this emotion? See if you can bring some gentle acceptance to it, recognizing all emotions are okay, it’s what we do with them that can lead to problems.

Investigate: Most importantly, get curious about your emotion. What does it feel like, particularly in your body? Can you feel it in your chest or belly or elsewhere? Does it move or stay the same? Are there accompanying thoughts?

Not Identify: As we go through the above process, we will naturally begin to take this emotion less personally. We will find ourselves not feeling so tossed about by it, but will be able to see it as it is, just an emotion: energy in motion passing through us. The dis-identification process allows us to have a little space from our difficult emotions and find more peace and ease.

Here’s a briefer exercise you can do in just a few minutes anytime, to help you recognize what is happening inside – remember every emotion will go away – they are never permanent!

S T O P- interrupt your anxiety (or any other emotion you may be feeling)

S: Stop

T: Take a breath

O: Observe what is occurring internally (feelings, thoughts) and externally

P: Proceed